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Book Review: Daniel Heartz. Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven. 1781-1802. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-393-06634-0.

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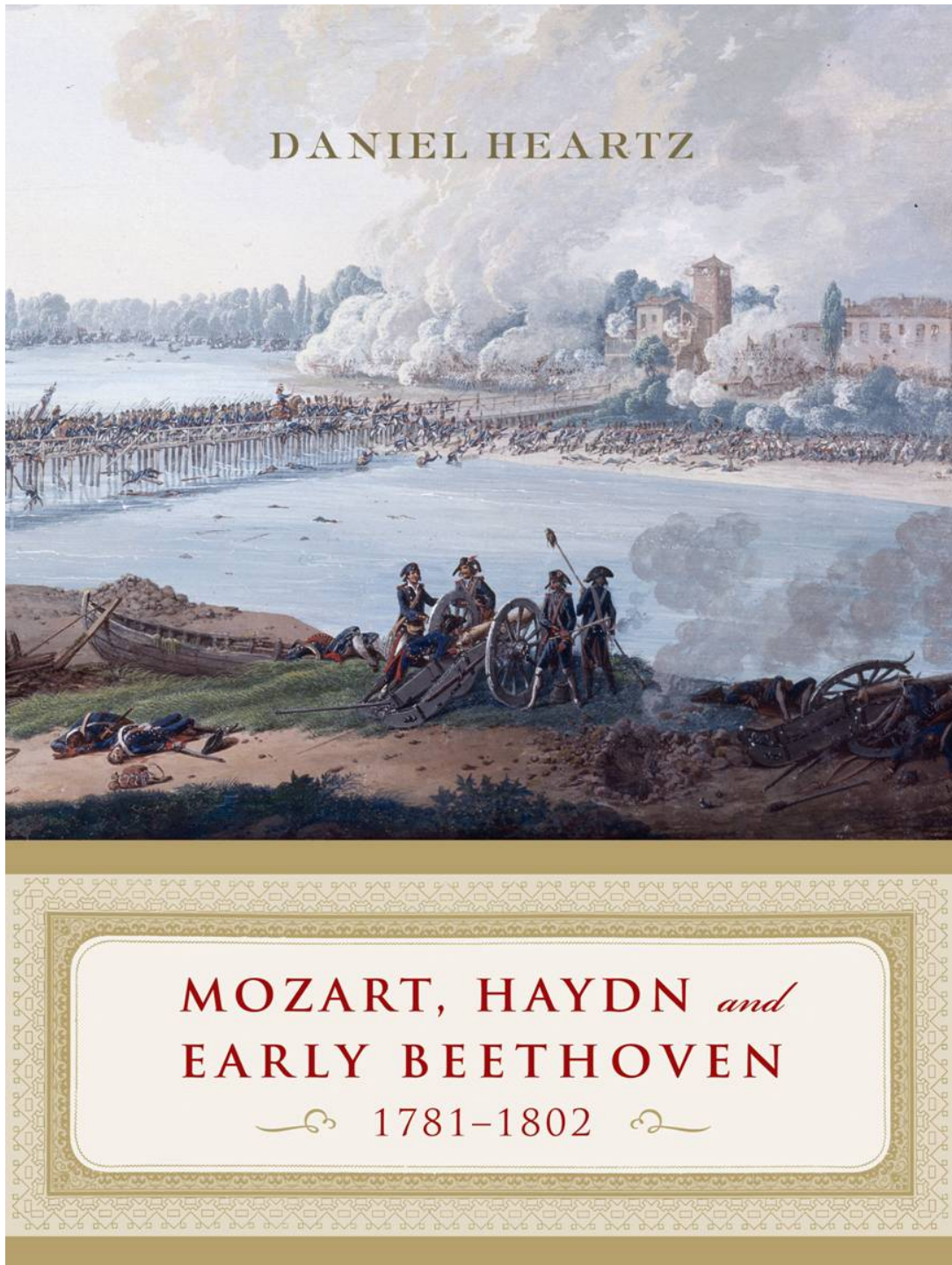
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Daniel Heartz. *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven. 1781–1802.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-393-06634-0.

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Forty-seven years ago, Daniel Hartz signed a contract to write an “Introduction to Classic Music” for the Norton Introduction to Music series. The story of how the contract for a modest one-volume survey led to the recently completed trilogy of more than 2600 pages that represents the crowning achievement of Hartz’s distinguished career is one of the remarkable scholarly odysseys of our times. Hartz has recounted the whole story, and it is a saga well worth reading for what it reveals both about the history of eighteenth-century music and about the realities of scholarly life.¹

Briefly told, the original contract of 1964 was for Hartz to write a survey of the Classic period for college undergraduates. The larger volume for Norton’s magisterial History of Music Series, then seemingly approaching completion, was reserved for Paul Henry Lang, the general editor of the series.

With Lang’s cheerful assent, Hartz postponed the Classic survey while he completed first one edition for the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, then another, as well as other scholarly projects. In the meantime, Lang was also occupied with other projects, and his volume for the

History of Music series remained similarly unfinished. By 1971 the contract for this larger book had been handed off to Hartz and the undergraduate survey was taken over by Philip G. Downs.²

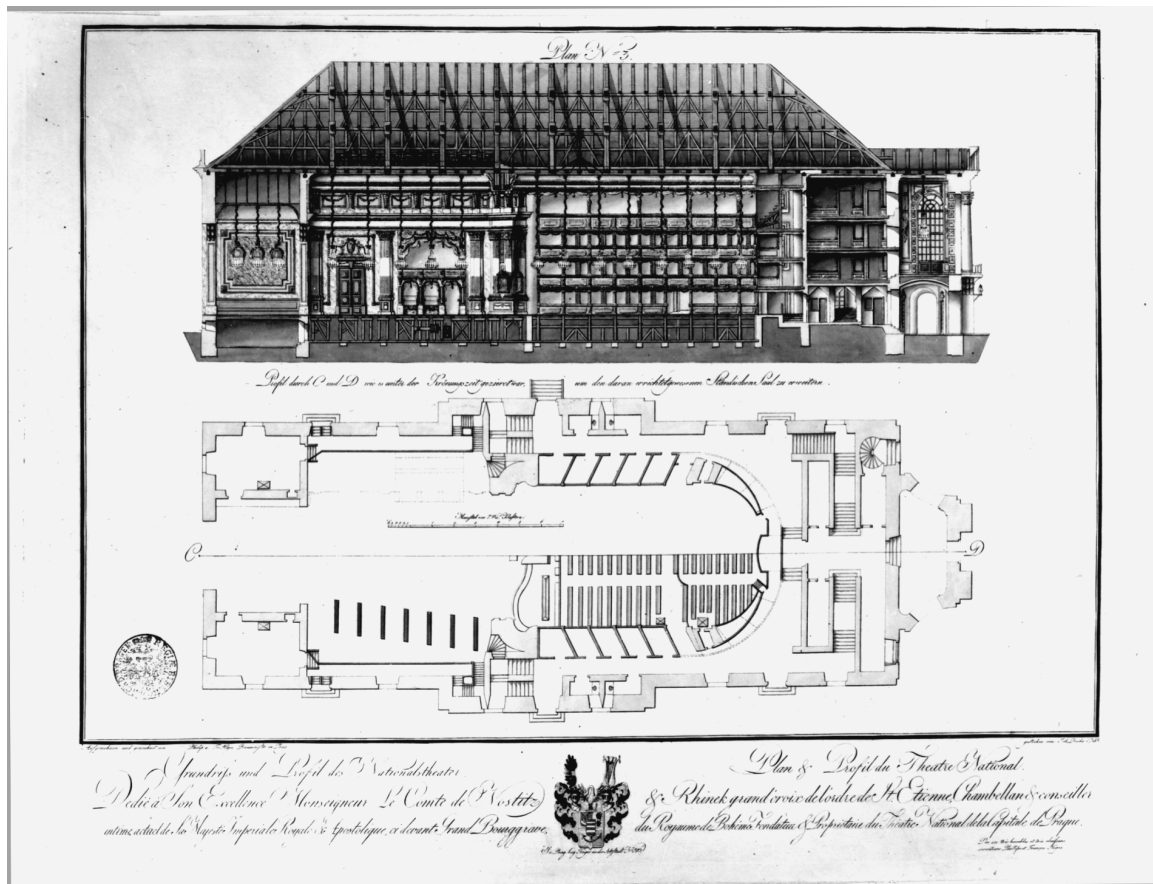
Hartz still faced what had been an obstacle for Lang as well as himself: the vast but crucial repertoire of little known music from the early- and mid-eighteenth century, especially (but not only) Italian opera. As he worked his way through this repertoire, Hartz realized that he could not adequately survey music in Italy, Paris, Mannheim and other European centers and also expect to cover mid-eighteenth-century Viennese music in only a couple of chapters at the end of the volume. He consequently proposed splitting the book into two parts and turned his attention to what would be the first volume of his trilogy, *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School. 1740–1780*, published in 1995.³

The second volume was completed next and published in 2003 as [*Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style*](#).⁴ Hartz's accomplishment at this point was considerable—more than 1800 pages covering a vast swath of eighteenth-century music more

comprehensively than any other single source—but it still left untouched the greatest achievements of the Classic style: the mature works of Mozart, late Haydn, and the early music of Beethoven. And so, Hartz writes, “back to the writing desk I went, even before the publication of *European Capitals*.”⁵

About six years later Hartz completed his long-projected, sweeping survey of the Classic period with *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven*, published in 2009. The subject is sufficiently distinct and well defined that the volume can stand on its own, but it is difficult to assess it alone without reference to Hartz’s larger accomplishment in the entire trilogy. The set unmistakably represents a significant contribution to scholarship. Hartz’s knowledge of the repertoire is unparalleled, as is his understanding of the political and social context of the music. All three books are filled with important insights, and there can be little question that they will long remain a benchmark for classic-period scholarship, the *sine qua non* for any student of the era.

It is a pleasure to report that Norton has supported Hartz's efforts well. The volumes include many musical examples that support the text, from single lines to full scores. *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven* contains 165 musical examples, many of them subdivided into entries a, b, c, and so forth. The number of illustrations has declined from eighty-two black-and-white pictures and twelve color plates in the first volume to forty-five black-and-white images in the third, but these are nonetheless welcome—especially since they include not only the expected portraits of persons mentioned in the text, but also maps, street plans, and illustrations of theaters and stage productions, all of which add significantly to one's understanding of the musical life of the period.



I am also happy to observe that the series has real *footnotes* throughout. There is a useful List of Works Cited, and the index is extensive, with entries for names, places, works, and important key words (baryton, contrafacta, gallant style, etc.). I found relative few editorial or spell-check errors (eg.: “once” for “one” on p. 20), which is testimony to the admirable care with which the volumes have been prepared. On the other hand, one wishes for a firmer editorial hand in

dealing with sentences that try to carry too much weight, such as “Stephanie adapted the libretto [of *Doktor und Apotheker*] from an obscure French play and the music was composed by Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, who was not new to Vienna but [even though?] this was his first musical comedy for the capital” (p. 181), ensuring consistency in the treatment of terminology, or resolving such organizational problems as an unexplained reference to “affectionate letters from . . . Mrs. Schroeter” on p. 450, preceding her full introduction on pp. 455–56.

Viewed in relationship to the textbook that Hertz set out to write in 1964, the three books constitute both more and less than might have been expected. More because of the great length and detail encompassed by each volume; less because the books lack the rigid (some would say inflexible) structure characteristic of other surveys in the Norton series.

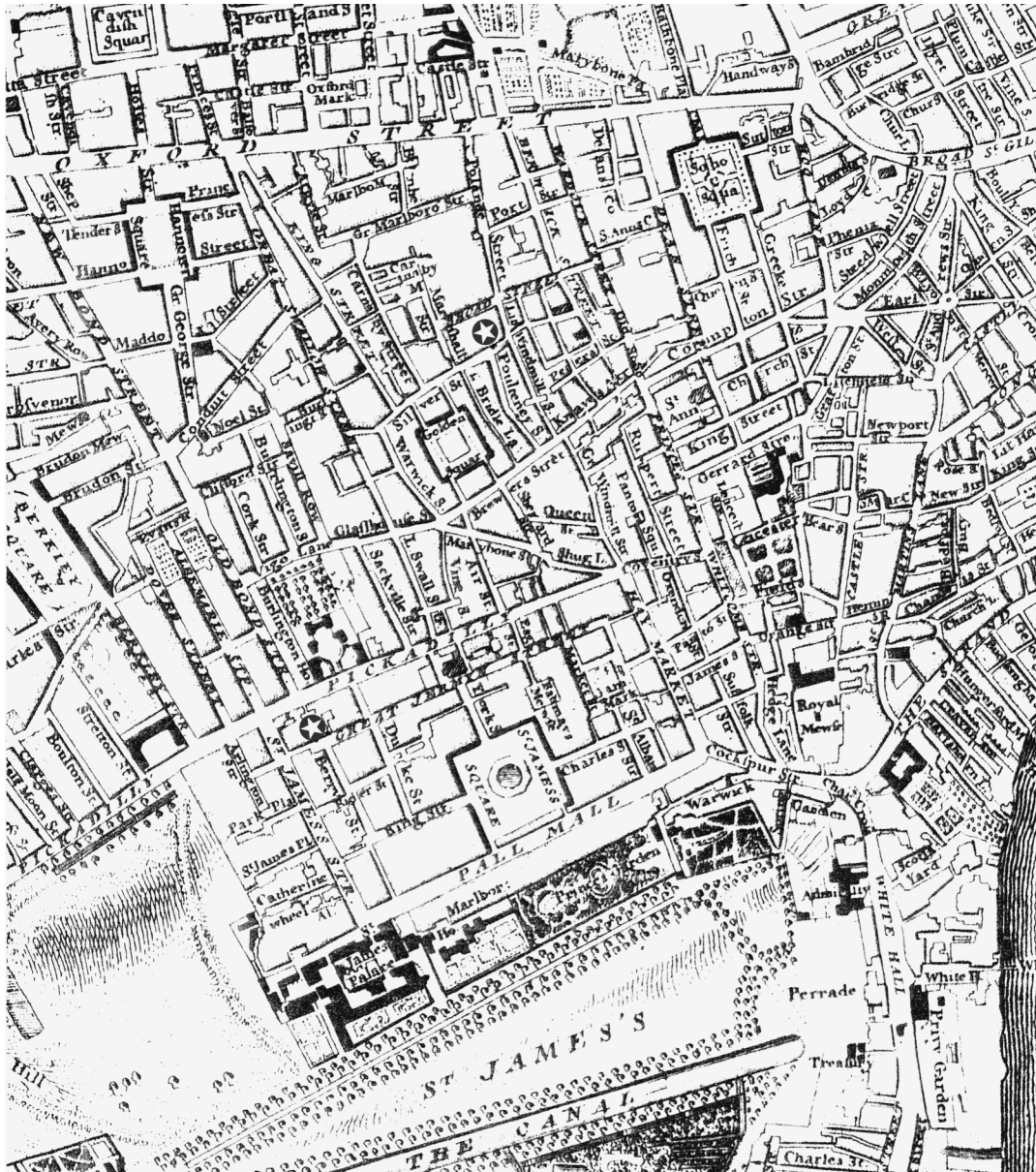
Indeed, the style of all three books is not that of the well organized survey; instead, it is more like a cozy fireside chat with a treasured friend, an amazingly knowledgeable friend, and that is both the joy

and the shortcoming of the books. It is a joy because the text is a pleasure to read, especially for anyone who knows the composers and works being discussed. Hertz is a delightful companion, and his knowledge of the repertoire is both broad and deep. There are fresh insights throughout. On the other hand, it is a shortcoming because the loose, conversational manner of the discussion often lacks focus and balance. The discussions often include digressions and asides that are entertaining in conversation but distracting in a written text. Details are thrown in that clearly appeal to Hertz, but that have little or no real significance to the discussion at hand, as on p. 493:

The concert [2 March 1794] began with a symphony by Reichardt, who like Fischer was in Prussian service. On the fields of battle, Britain's Prussian allies were doing no better than the Austrians.

In the end, the reader too easily gets lost in the details about the individual works, fascinating as they are, without achieving a broader view of the composers and genres that a careful survey would provide. For the reader who brings that larger context to the volumes, this is no problem. But for less informed readers,

students for example, who are looking for a traditional survey of the Classic period, it could pose a problem.



London district where Haydn resided. Figure 5.4 (p. 491) of *Haydn, Mozart, and Early Beethoven. 1781-1802*.

The work under review and the final volume of the series, *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven*, is laid out exactly as the

title suggests: a discussion first of Mozart, then of Haydn, and finally early Beethoven, and their works of the years 1781 to 1802. The portions on Mozart and Haydn are subdivided into chronological chapters (“Haydn: The 1780s,” “Haydn in London, 1791–1795,” etc.), each in turn subdivided around significant works or genres. Beethoven receives only a single chapter, “Beethoven in Bonn and Vienna,” which, because of the chronological limits of the book as a whole, goes no farther than 1802 and Symphony No. 2. An appendix features short discussions of Michael Kelly, “An Irish Tenor in the Burgtheater” (pp. 793–97), and (Giuseppi) “Sarti Witnesses Haydn’s *Armida*” (pp. 799–802).

Individual topics in the book are often introduced with passages presenting contextual information. It is here that Hertz’s wide erudition is called into play, and these passages alone will be valuable to teachers and students alike. Many different subjects are often pulled together, with references across time and space that might not have occurred to other authors. Read, for example, the introduction to Haydn’s *Orlando Paladino* (pp.

329–30), with its references to Guglielmi, Traetta, Rameau, Jommelli, Piccinni, Paisiello, and Mozart, as well as to Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando furioso* and the work of various librettists. "Contexts for the Paris Symphonies" (pp. 356–61) relates the political background of Marie Antoinette's marriage with Louis XVI to musical life in the French capital and carefully lays out the context of the commissioning of the Haydn's "Paris" symphonies by the comte d'Ogny. Similar passages throughout the volume are only occasionally diluted by the inclusion of irrelevant information.

The extensive discussions of the music are another matter, however. Here, Hertz's informal style results in an unsifted mixture of intriguing information, provocative comparisons with other works, genuine analysis, and program-note-like descriptions. Furthermore, because Hertz is following a stream of consciousness rather than a crafted outline, there are questions of priorities among works. One suspects that he writes more about works because he has engaged with them

more, or knows more about them, rather than because they are in any way more important.

For example, in the course of describing Mozart's 1783 visit to Salzburg, he devotes only seven lines to the Mass in C minor (pp. 55–56), far less than he allots to *Davidde penitente* (pp. 105–06), the 1785 cantata derived from the Mass. In comparison, Hertz allots more than two pages to the “Strinasacchi” Sonata for violin, K. 454, written after Mozart's return to Vienna in 1784 (pp. 56–58). The latter discussion includes ample background on the virtuoso for whom the sonata was written, Regina Strinasacchi, a quotation from one of Leopold's letters, and a descriptive analysis of the sonata. This imbalance is hard to understand, considering the place the unfinished C minor Mass occupies in Mozart's musical and psychological worlds.

In the case of the Requiem (pp. 264–70), Hertz writes briefly of the financial context of Mozart having taken the commission, with the requisite citation of the composer's letters to Michael

Puchberg, and provides a movement-by-movement description but almost no discussion of the most interesting aspect of the work: the history of its manuscript and issues of attribution of its various parts. It is hard to consider any discussion of one of the most notoriously unfinished works of the Classic period to be complete without thorough coverage of those topics.

Too often the discussion of music lapses into a kind of superficial description that sounds like uninspired program notes. Hertz knows a great deal about the works he is writing about, and the discussions are often provocative, but do we need to read about an aria in Haydn's *Armida* that

Rinaldo begins, swearing fidelity to Armida by her beautiful eyes (Example 4.12). His supple melodic line first takes his voice up to G, then reaches that same G again via a chromatic rise in mm. 6–7 before sinking quickly to the cadence in m. 8. A modulation to the dominant follows, joined in the example at mm. 12–13. Having established the new tonic, F, with a cadence in m. 13, Haydn again took the voice up an octave, and with the

melismas in m. 14 repeats the chromatic rise to G, then to high A, the melodic peak, before descending to the cadence in the lower octave. (p. 337)

This kind of information is either obvious to someone with access to the music, or it is gibberish.

Elsewhere, Hertz relies on fanciful description rather than analysis, as when he writes of the String Quartet in D major, op. 50 no. 6, that the “*Adagio* is less theatrical but does project a hint of the stage, like a ballad from olden times sung by a troubadour to a fancy accompaniment” (p. 380). Such non-scholarly writing raises the question of who the audience is for Hertz’s book: is it the general public, who might enjoy Hertz’s poetic descriptions, is it other scholars, advanced students, or younger students? Unfortunately there seems to some material for each in the course of the text.

The introductory and background information is, as already mentioned, exemplary. Since it often includes biographical information well known to scholars, one might assume that the book is indeed intended as an introduction to the subject. On the other

hand, Hertz freely uses specialized terminology that may only be familiar to other scholars. Among the words and phrases that appear with no explanation are “*cadence galante*” (p. 49; defined only in the previous volume of the trilogy), “trumpets crooked in F” (p. 61), “paper studies” (pp. 73 and 183), “Hapsburger Prunkstil” (p. 165), and “Augenmusik” (p. 636). These are perfectly useful terms, but they are certainly not familiar to the general public or most younger students.

There are a number of other minor issues that scholarly readers will notice. For no apparent reason, German quotations are translated into English, but most of those in French are not; again, editorial consistency would have been preferable. Hertz’s coyness in referring to other scholars as “one commentator” (Maynard Solomon, p. 218), “one critic” (James Webster, p. 354), or “an expert on the quartets” (Ludwig Finscher, p. 381), when the name appears immediately below in a footnote, becomes a distracting mannerism. Elsewhere, he uses passive voice to avoid naming scholars, even including himself (“so it has been claimed,” H.C. Robbins Landon, p. 327; “That last dance has been compared,” Hertz himself, p. 389). Discussions of

sonata and other forms do not take notice of recent, rigorous work in the field.

Finally, Haydn scholars may be startled to read that upon hearing of Mozart's death, Haydn "abandoned his hopes of retiring in Mozart's favor and resolved to go on" (p. 306). No further explanation of this unexpected statement appears until more than 100 pages later, in a citation of Griesinger: "Had Mozart not hastened to an early death on December 5, 1791, he would have taken Haydn's place in Salomon's concerts in 1794"⁶ (p. 418). Hertz continues:

The last item of information does not occur in Dies or elsewhere. It was Haydn's intention after his return to Vienna to retire in favor of Mozart, or so he told Griesinger (p. 418).

Quite apart from whether that is what Griesinger in fact says, the evidence ("or so he told Griesinger") does not support so definitive a statement as Hertz had written on p. 306. Once again, such imprecision is understandable in our imaginary fireside chat, but it seems careless in a scholarly survey.

In spite of such quibbles, *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven* is a fitting conclusion to Hertz's monumental trilogy of books on the Classic period. Few scholars have the opportunity to sum up a life's work in a single, extensive work (or works), as Hertz has done, and fewer still with the full support of a major publisher, as Norton has given Hertz. Author and readers alike can be grateful for this remarkable opportunity. All three books will be read by scholars and students of the Classic period for generations to come, and rightfully so.

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¹ Hertz, Daniel, "A Pilgrim's Progress Report concerning 'Music in the Classic Era,'" in *Music, Libraries, and the Academy: Essays in Honor of Lenore Coral* (Middleton, Wisc.: A-R Editions, 2007): pp. 21–29.

² That volume was eventually published as *Classical Music: The Era of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992).

³ New York: W.W. Norton, 1995.

⁴ New York: W.W. Norton.

⁵ Hertz, "A Pilgrim's Progress," p. 28.

⁶ From Gottwals, Vernon, *Joseph Haydn: Eighteenth-Century Gentleman and Genius* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963); page not cited.